

ATEL Committee Meeting

Public Utilities Commission

June 26, 2008

9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

James Litvack, Denise Corson, Laurie Duffy, Jim Lanni, Nancy Shuster, Sean Gill, Steve Florio, Allen Dewayne, Nancy Gage and Interpreter Dorothy Hodge.

1. Information packets were distributed and introductions made. Minutes reviewed and James requested a clarification that the Gift of Hearing Program at URI is still open and just that the Audiologist training program is closed. Jim accepted the minutes and Pam seconded.

2. ATAP update -Denise informed the Committee that ATEL's yearly state funds were reduced by \$2500, but new ATAP funds will bring an additional \$10,000 to this year's budget that will be used entirely for the purchase of new equipment. Also, due to the partnership with ATAP, ATEL will be able to reduce some overhead thru partnering with other ATAP agencies and Hamilton relay to save on Conference fees. Also, Sharon Dipinto who works for ATAP will be incorporating ATEL's website into the State's server, again reducing ATEL overhead by not having to pay a web design contractor. Also, ATEL is utilizing ATAP funded brochures and giveaways to reduce printing and marketing material costs.

3. Wireless Cell Update -Denise informed the committee that Hawaii also has a wireless program with numerous product offerings. Hawaii clients have to sign a 2-year contract for \$29.99 per month, which doesn't include voice calls. Denise tried to contact both T-Mobile and Sprint representatives to see if we could do a pilot program similar to the California program that allowed for no contracts to be signed by client. The local T-Mobile Representative returned Denise's call, but still hasn't gotten back to her; the local Sprint Representative also has not returned Denise's phone calls. Denise will follow-up for next month's meeting. Steve Florio mentioned that maybe ATEL could participate in being a liaison between individuals who signed wireless contracts that want to be able to get into a different wireless device to possibly sell their contract to another individual. James stated that maybe the ATAP Device Exchange Website www.GETATstuff.com could be utilized. Denise stated that she didn't think ATEL would be able to handle the logistics of these exchanges, but would mention to the ATAP Partners if we could put these types of contracts on this website. James discussed that wireless contracts can be terminated with no penalty fees if someone's hearing condition changes and they are no longer able to utilize their current equipment.

4. Guest Speaker DeWayne Allen discussed his mission for the "Johnny/Susie GOHS Fund which is a newly created not-for-profit charitable organization designed for families with a child of hearing loss. He stated that the concept is in its infancy and is seeking to assemble a team of 5 advisors who will work with him. This Fund

would be a family trust fund (incorporated as an LLC) to handle the financial obligations that a child will have during his or her life with a hearing loss. He stated that most families will not be in a position to handle the financial obligations of a deaf child through life without outside assistance in managing financial obligations. He would involve family members and extended family members that could contribute financially to the fund, and that he would also train a family member with the most financial know how to run the fund. He stated he is looking for qualified parties to become involved to establish the RI Charter Society and if interested to contact him at dwallen@cox.net.

5. Guest Speaker Nancy Gage is a Board Recognized Specialist in Fluency Disorders. She spoke about the disability of stuttering and how speaking on the telephone further exasperates it. She thought that the Casa Futura Technologies' Telephone Fluency System would be a useful addition to the ATEL Program. Sean also mentioned that individuals with Speech Disabilities would also benefit from three of Hamilton's services:

„« Speech-to-Speech - this service is especially for people who have a difficult time speaking or being understood on the phone. Speech-to-Speech relay involves specially trained Communication Assistants who are familiar with a wide variety of speech patterns of callers with cerebral palsy, stroke complications, voice disorders or other speech disabilities. The CA revoices your side of the conversation as needed, so you no longer have to worry if the person on the other end of the line has understood you.

„« VCO (Voice Carry Over) ¡V this service allows you to talk directly to the people you call¡Xand a special operator types their responses typed back to you. VCO is especially helpful for people who can speak clearly, but may have a hard time hearing over the phone.

„« CapTel ¡V this service is similar to VCO that allows you to talk directly to the people you call¡Xbut their responses are captioned back to you thru voice recognition technology. CapTel is also especially helpful for people who can speak clearly, but may have a hard time hearing over the phone.

6. Denise played a Casa Futura Technologies DVD that showed the owner of the business Thomas David Kehoe at a job interview in the early 1980¡'s in which he was barely understandable due to his stuttering. Then is showed Thomas current day where it was barely noticeable due to DAF (Delayed Auditory Feedback). He demonstrated the Telephone Fluency System that he created using DAF that can be used with and without the telephone. DAF immediately reduces stuttering about 70% at normal speaking rates without training, mental effort, or abnormal-sounding or abnormally slow speech. 55% carryover fluency after removing the device, without speech therapy. With speech therapy, DAF can induce a slower speaking rate with stretched vowels to make even severe stutterers nearly 100% fluent. Currently, there are 16 states that have this device in their program. Nancy Gage stated that she would contact other Speech Professionals to see if this is something that would recommend. Denise stated that the ATEL office would not distribute this system directly but it would have to be given out thru

their speech pathologist to ensure proper training. Lauri Duffy stated that maybe we could keep a demo in the office to let the Speech Pathologist demo. The Committee thought this would be a good idea.

Denise will follow-up with Nancy to see what the feedback is from the other Speech Professionals.

7. Sean attempted to do the Web Captel Demo, but due to a firewall at the PUC, he wasn't able to utilize the Internet. Denise brought hard screen prints to show how the Web Captel works. Jim stated he would see if he could fix this issue so that at the next meeting we could try again.

8. Open Discussion- Nancy asked if CART services could be provided at the Meeting. James stated that as long as you request in advance that ATEL is required to accommodate either thru interpreters, Cart or Tactile (for the blind). Nancy also wanted to advise the committee that she has started the RI Cochlear Support Group last year and the next meeting is July 7th from 7-9 at the Narragansett Library to focus on Medicare/Medicare Hearing Issues. Also, that it is open to the public and she has 15 folks already signed up. Nancy is also setting up a meeting at the Hamilton House in Providence on September 17th.

9. Dates of next meetings: September 25, 2008 and January 8, 2009.